secured in the privacy of a small back yard! It is only necessary first to catch your mouse. This done, he is penned in a glass cage and confronted by the camera. So soon as an attractive posture has been assumed, the exposure is made. A suitable background is all that is needed to deceive even the very elect!

Thus is the mystery explained of some of the wonderful pictures of "wild life with the camera" that have excited the envy and admiration of many who have sought, and sought in vain, in our fields and hedgerows to obtain similar pictures!

The illustrations in this book are unusually good and plentifully distributed. The specimen given herewith was selected with no little difficulty, inasmuch as the high standard of excellence, both in taste and execution, which these pictures present rendered choice difficult. W. P. P.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BAHAMAS.[1]

TWO years ago there was published in this country an account of a cruise to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands[2] by an American party for the purpose of obtaining natural history and ethnological specimens for the National Museum at Washington, and every Englishman worthy the name who read that work can scarcely have failed to experience a feeling of shame that it was not long ago anticipated and rendered superfluous by the enterprise of his own countrymen. If such a feeling exist in the case of a work dealing in a more or less cursory manner with the results of a private expedition to remote islands of little or no commercial importance, how must it be intensified when we find an American scientific society undertaking a systematic biological, geological, historical, and sociological survey of a group of islands which are supposed to rank among the more important possessions of the British Crown?

That the work should have been undertaken by American enterprise is, *ipso facto*, a confession that it required doing; in other words, that it ought to have been done by Englishmen, and the fact of its being left to our Transatlantic cousins is virtually an admission that our rulers—in spite of what we are being continually told as to the all-importance of science if we are to continue to hold our position as a nation—are blind to the needs and signs of the times in matters scientific! That we should have hitherto possessed no detailed and comprehensive account of a group of islands dotted over an area about as large as the British Islands, which has formed part of our Empire for generations, is, indeed, little short of a national disgrace, and the fact that Americans have cut in and done our own work for us in our own possessions speaks volumes as to the amount of attention that has been paid to the cry of "Wake-up, England!"

The contrast between our own apathy and American enterprise in scientific matters of this nature is intensified when we compare what is being done for the natural history of the Philippines by their new owners with what has been left undone in the case of the West Indies (and many other islands we could mention) by their ancient lords. We were about to urge our rulers, for very shame, to set about doing for the other West Indian islands what Americans have already accomplished for the Bahamas, but we fear we should only be speaking to deaf ears, and therefore refrain. Let us add that in all this we have not one spark of jealousy, but rather unbounded and respectful admiration, in regard to the work our American cousins have so successfully and so thoroughly carried out.

The trustees of the Geographical Society of Baltimore have, it appears, set themselves to accomplish two main objects by means of the body they govern, namely, in the first place, to furnish their public with an annual course of lectures connected with geography, and, in the second place, to foster geographical research in general, and from time to time to publish monographs dealing with some particular piece of geographical investigation carried out under the auspices of the society. The volume before us is the first of these proposed monographs, and its completeness and wealth of illustrations render it a more than usually striking and handsome example of American thoroughness.

The object of the expedition was to investigate the origin and natural history of the Bahamas, and also to conduct studies on lines intimately associated with the well-being of their inhabitants. The scientific staff included no less than twenty-four members, with Dr. G. B. Shattuck as director, most of whom are specialists in one or more particular departments, the special subjects of investigation being geology, tides, terrestrial magnetism and climatology, soils, botany, mosquitoes, fishes, other vertebrates, medicine, and history. Even this, however, by no means represents the full force employed in making public the results of the expedition, for many of the collections were handed over to specialists who did not accompany the latter, the reptiles and amphibians being, for instance, consigned to Dr. L. Stejneger, the birds to Mr. J. H. Riley, the mammals to Mr. G. S. Miller, and so on.

For months previous to the departure of the expedition, the director was engaged in equipping and organising its various sections, procuring the necessary apparatus, so that everything, even down to the most minute detail, should be in such a state of completeness that work might be commenced the very moment of arrival. The expedition sailed from Baltimore on June 1, 1903, equipped for a two months' cruise. Since a number of its members were in Government offices, from which they could only obtain leave during the months of June and July, the length of the cruise had been necessarily limited to that period, and every effort had consequently been made that work should progress with the greatest possible despatch during the time available. Unfortunately, bad weather was experienced during the outward voyage, so that Nassau, the first stopping place, was not reached until June 17, and as it was necessary to start on the return journey before the end of July, only about five weeks were left for work. The more southerly islands of the Bahama group had in consequence to be left unvisited; but apart from this omission, the greater part of the work which had been planned was brought to completion, and all the members of the staff are to be congratulated on the rapidity with which they executed their respective tasks. Except dredging and fishing, most of the work was done on shore, but all the field-work was, of course, merely preliminary to study in the laboratory. In examining the living products of the sea-bed—a sight of rare beauty—great advantage was derived from the glass-bottomed boat which formed part of the equipment.

Our statesmen should not fail to notice that, according to opinion in America, the construction of the Panama Canal in the near future (which is said to be assured) is destined to bring renewed prosperity to

[1] "The Bahama Islands." Edited by G. B. Shattuck. Pp. xxxii+630; 93 plates. [New York: The Macmillan Co.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd. (published for the Geographical Society of Baltimore), 1905.] Price 2*l.* 2*s.* net.

[2] "In the Andamans and Nicobars." By C. B. Kloss. (London: John Murray, 1903.)

the West Indies, and the hope is expressed by the editor that the facts recorded in the work before us "may be instrumental, if only in a small degree, in causing the Bahama Islands to share" in this prosperity. Commentary on this statement is superfluous.

The picture presented by the islands is well described in the following passage by the editor:—

"No words can describe the beauty of Nassau as one approaches the harbour from the sea. The ocean of deep sapphire suddenly changes to a lagoon of emerald green surrounded by shores of snow-white coral sand. Beyond, the white limestone houses of the town, intermingled with groves of graceful palms, and half-concealed by gorgeous poincianas, rise in a gentle slope against a sky of purest blue. The green transparent water; the intense blue of the sky; the blotches of blood-red poincianas; the snow-white drifts of coral-sand; the vivid green of the foliage—all these unexpected and yet harmonious contrasts strike the eye together, and stamp on the memory a picture of rugged beauty which nothing can efface. The impression thus received does not suffer when later the tourist wanders about the quaint old town to examine at leisure the details of the picture."

Our limits of space allow of only a brief reference to the details of the work of the expedition. An interesting and important feature connected with the geology of the Bahamas is that they are composed almost entirely of débris derived from corals and other calcareous organisms, and rest on a shallow, submerged platform, separated by deep ocean-troughs from the adjacent land-masses of North America and the West Indies. Few of the Bahama animals appear to be distinct from those of the mainland, although some of the mammals have been described (in earlier publications) as separate local races. Of some of these latter the skulls are now for the first time figured. An attractive feature of the volume is formed by the numerous coloured plates of marine Bahama fishes, which convey an excellent idea of the brilliant hues characteristic of all fishes which haunt coral-banks. Of especial interest is the plate of the "mouse-fish" or Sargasso-fish, the remarkable shape and coloration of which are doubtless developed to harmonise with its surroundings of floating seaweed.

This notice may be fitly brought to a close by the expression of our opinion as to the high value and importance of the work initiated by the Baltimore Geographical Society, and by the tendering of our congratulations to all those by whom it has been so successfully and faultlessly executed. R. L.

NOTES.

THE council of the Society of Arts has awarded the Albert medal of the society for the present year to Lord Rayleigh, "In recognition of the influence which his researches, directed to the increase of scientific knowledge, have had upon industrial progress, by facilitating, amongst other scientific applications, the provision of accurate electrical standards, the production of improved lenses, and the development of apparatus for sound signalling at sea."

THE De Morgan medal of the London Mathematical Society has this year been awarded to Dr. H. F. Baker, F.R.S., for his researches in pure mathematics.

THE annual conversazione of the Institution of Electrical Engineers will be held at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, on Thursday, June 29.

THE annual general meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry will be opened on Monday morning, July 10, at University College, Gower Street, when the president, Dr. Wm. H. Nichols, will deliver an address.

THE fourth International Ornithological Congress was opened by Prof. Oustalet at the Imperial Institute on Tuesday. Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, the new president of the congress, delivered an address.

THE death is announced of M. Edouard Simon, the eminent French engineer. He took an active part in the management of the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie nationale, and contributed twenty-four papers to its proceedings.

AT the National Museum at Washington a series of specimens has been arranged to illustrate the associations and mode of occurrence of gold in nature, and Mr. George P. Merrill, the curator, has published in the *Engineering and Mining Journal* a useful list of associations represented in the collection. In the forty-eight cases enumerated, the gold occurs native, and in particles of sufficient size to be recognised by the unaided eye.

WITH the view of lessening the danger of lead-poisoning now encountered by diamond-cutters, the Dutch Government has offered a prize of 6000 florins for the most satisfactory substitute for the tin-lead alloy now used for holding the diamonds during the process of cutting. Applications, which may be written in English, should be sent before January 1, 1906, to Dr. L. Aronstein, Polytechnic School, Delft, Holland.

IN the Free Library at Hampstead there is displayed at present a selection from the collection of flint implements made by the late Mr. Henry Stopes. The exhibit gives a sample, not only of the whole collection, but of that part which deals with the ancient inhabitants of the Thames Valley, and it has been selected to interest the passer-by and educate his eye what to look for in his walks abroad.

Science announces that Dr. Franz Boas has resigned the curatorship of the anthropological department of the American Museum of Natural History. He will continue his connection with the museum, conducting the researches and publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition and of the East Asiatic Committee.

A REUTER message from Fort de France (Martinique) dated June 12 reports that Mont Pelée in the past few days has been displaying some renewal of activity. It is reported that on Saturday night, June 10, "the dome suddenly became illuminated. The dome collapsed on Sunday morning, and a mass of mud overflowed into the valley below, while a cloud of smoke rose to a height of 1000 yards."

THE departmental committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into the nature and causes of grouse disease has made the following appointments:—Dr. C. G. Seligmann as bacteriologist to the commission, Mr. A. E. Shipley, F.R.S., as expert on the subject of internal parasites, Dr. H. Hammond Smith as assistant bacteriologist and additional field observer, and Mr. G. C. Muirhead as field observer.

THE Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland has arranged with Mr. J. J. Harrison to publish a full scientific report upon the physical and psychophysical characteristics of the pygmies whom the latter has brought to this country. For this purpose the council of the institute has appointed a select committee consisting of the following anthropologists and medical men, who, with the assistance of Mr. Harrison, will carry on the necessary investigations:—Sir Harry Johnston (chairman),